TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA PERTUSSIS (Tdap) VACCINE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1 Why get vaccinated?

Tdap (**T**etanus, **D**iphtheria, **P**ertussis) vaccine can protect adolescents and adults against three serious diseases.

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis are all caused by bacteria. Diphtheria and pertussis are spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts, scratches, or wounds.

TETANUS (Lockjaw) causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body.

- **It can lead to** "locking" of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in up to 2 cases out of 10.

DIPHTHERIA causes a thick covering in the back of the throat.

- **It can lead to** breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death.

PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough) causes severe coughing spells, vomiting, and disturbed sleep.

- **It can lead to** weight loss, incontinence, rib fractures and passing out from violent coughing, pneumonia, and hospitalization due to complications.

  In 2004 there were more than 25,000 cases of pertussis in the U.S. More than 8,000 of these cases were among adolescents and more than 7,000 were among adults. Up to 2 in 100 adolescents and 5 in 100 adults with pertussis are hospitalized or have complications.

2 Tdap and related vaccines

Vaccines for Adolescents and Adults

- **Tdap** was licensed in 2005. It is the first vaccine for adolescents and adults that protects against all three diseases.
- **Td** (tetanus and diphtheria) vaccine has been used for many years as booster doses for adolescents and adults. It does not contain pertussis vaccine.

Vaccines for Children Younger than 7 Years

- **DTaP** vaccine is given to children to protect them from these three diseases. Immunity can fade over time, and periodic "booster" doses are needed by adolescents and adults to keep immunity strong. (**DTP** is an older version of DTaP. It is no longer used in the United States.)
- **DT** contains diphtheria and tetanus vaccines. It is used for children younger than 7 who should not get pertussis vaccine.

3 Who should get Tdap vaccine and when?

Adolescents 11 through 18 years of age should get one booster dose of Tdap.

- A dose of Tdap is recommended for **adolescents who got DTaP or DTP as children** but have not yet gotten a dose of Td. The preferred age is 11-12.
- **Adolescents who have already gotten a booster dose of Td** are encouraged to get a dose of Tdap as well, for protection against pertussis. Waiting at least 5 years between Td and Tdap is encouraged, but not required.
- **Adolescents who did not get all their scheduled doses of DTaP or DTP** as children should complete the series using a combination of Td and Tdap.

Adults 19 through 64 years of age should substitute Tdap for **one** booster dose of Td. Td should be used for later booster doses.

- **Adults who expect to have close contact with an infant** younger than 12 months of age should get a dose of Tdap. Waiting at least 2 years since the last dose of Td is suggested, but not required.
- **New mothers** who have not already gotten a dose of Tdap should get a dose as soon as possible after delivery.
- **Healthcare workers who have direct patient contact** in hospitals or clinics should get a dose of Tdap. A 2-year interval since the last Td is suggested, but not required.

An adolescent or adult who gets a severe cut or burn might need protection against tetanus infection. Tdap may be used if the person has not had a previous dose.

Tdap may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Td should be used rather than Tdap for:
- Anybody who has already gotten Tdap,
- Adults 65 years of age and older,
- Children 7 through 9 years of age,
- Pregnant women,

or if Tdap is not available.

4 Some people should not get Tdap vaccine or should wait.

- Anyone who has had a **life-threatening allergic reaction** after a dose of DTP, DTaP, DT, or Td vaccine should not get Tdap.
- Anyone who has a **severe allergy to any component of the vaccine** should not get Tdap. Tell your healthcare provider if the person getting the vaccine has any known severe allergies.

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